EFFICIENT COLLATION ELEMENT STRUCTURE FOR HANDLING LARGE NUMBERS OF CHARACTERS

ABSTRACT

One embodiment of the present invention provides a system for facilitating use of a collation element that supports a large number of characters. The system operates by receiving the collation element and reading a primary weight value from a primary weight field within the collation element. If the primary weight value falls within a reserved set of values, the system reads an additional portion of the primary weight value from both a secondary weight field and a tertiary weight field within the collation element. On the other hand, if the primary weight value is not within the reserved set of values, the system reads a secondary weight value from the secondary weight field, and also reads a tertiary weight value from the tertiary weight field.

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